

providing the ID number to the central location; and
checking the validity of the ID number at the
central location.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of determining
the identity of the user further comprises the steps of:

determining if the local computer comprises a
datafile storing an ID number indicating the identity of
the user and providing the ID number to the central
location;

if there is no datafile storing an ID number at the
local computer, asking the user to provide a pre-assigned
ID number;

if the user does not have a pre-assigned ID number,
collecting information from the user and thereafter
allocating an ID number to the user; and

if an ID number is provided to the central location,
checking the validity of the ID number at the central
location.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the computer network is
the Internet and the central location is a webserver
coupled to a database, the step of redirecting further
comprising the steps:

providing the local computer with an address of a
website comprising the content associated with the image;

causing a browser program at the local computer to
navigate to the website.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the step of allocating

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storing a reward identifier in the database associated with the user; and

7. The method of claim 5 further comprising the steps of:

providing to the user, via the Internet, a list of rewards that have been allocated to the user.

8. The method of claim 7 further comprising the steps of:

allowing the user to select a reward from the list of rewards;

providing the local computer with an address of a promoter website comprising the content associated with the reward;

causing a browser program at the local computer to navigate to the promoter website; and

enabling the user to redeem the reward at the promoter website.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprising the step of expiring the redeemed reward.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the physical memory device is one of a magnetic stripe card or smartcard.

allowing the user to print the reward at the local computer;

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17. A computer-implemented method for interactively and electronically distributing and redeeming rewards via a computer network, the computer network coupled to a user computer and a central computer, the central computer coupled to a database, the computer network also coupled to a plurality of promoter computers, the method comprising the steps of:

at the user computer, displaying an image comprising a reward indicator;

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enabling a user to select the image;
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at a central computer, determining the identity of the user;

at the central computer, allocating to the user a reward associated with the reward indicator by storing a reward identifier in the database associated with the user; and

causing the user computer to connect with one of the

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allowing the user to select a reward;

claim 17 further
reward.

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active reward allocation:
a central computer monitoring rewards and is coupled to a computer promoter computer at a user computer with a reward index obtaining information allocating a reward from a central database, the selected advertisement transferring content associated with the selected advertisement at a user computer to receive a reward allocation upon obtaining information

(a) obtaining information to identify the user,
(b) allocating a reward to the user in the central database, the reward associated with the selected advertisement and a promoter, and
(c) transferring control to a promoter computer associated with the selected advertisement; and

(a) obtaining information to identify the user,

(d) instructing the promoter honor the reward.

wherein, when the user selects an image with an associated reward indicator, control is passed to the central computer which identifies the user and allocates a reward to the user associated with the selected image.

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a central computer coupled to the computer network, the central computer comprising a database, the database storing a list of registered users and a list of rewards that have been previously collected by each user and that are available for redemption;

a promoter computer coupled to the computer network,
the promoter computer operated by a promoter;

wherein, when the user wishes to redeem a reward, control is passed to the central computer which identifies the user and allows the user to select a reward from the list of rewards, and thereafter control is passed to the promoter computer for the user to redeem the selected reward.

33. The system of claim 32 wherein the user computer comprises a printing device to allow the user to print a reward for physical redemption.

34. The system of claim 32 wherein the image is an advertisement.

35. The system of claim 32 wherein the computer network

means, located at the central computer, for enabling the user to select one of the rewards in the list of rewards; and

means to instruct the promoter computer of the promoter associated with the selected reward that a valid reward has been selected for redemption by the user.

39. The system of claim 38 further comprising means to allow a user to transfer a reward in the list of rewards to another registered user.